PACE
of southwest michigan

Newsletter

Summer 2023

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Letter from the CEO

Jim Schlaman

Dear PACE family,

We are excited that our PACE family continues to grow. Our current enrollment is 246. PACE capacity for participants is 250, according to State of Michigan guidelines. Our desire is to expand beyond 250 to serve more families in Southwest Michigan. We are exploring a wonderful opportunity to expand into the city of Niles, opening a PACE center closer to current participants and future participants living in the south county and Cass county region.

Expanding into a second site has plenty of advantages. First and foremost is the ability to care for more families. Many seniors are in need of PACE services to improve quality of life, stay in the homes they love for as long as possible, and care in a holistic, compassionate manner. A PACE center in Niles will decrease drive time on the PACE vans for those living in Niles and surrounding communities.

We will keep you updated as the expansion process moves forward. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to a PACE Team Member or myself for more information. Take care and have a blessed day!

Kind regards,
Jim

Spotlight On PCA Program

"Without PCAs, I'm not sure a participant could stay safely in their home." That's how important the position of a PCA, or Personal Care Assistant, is to Raine, Nurse Educator at PACE of Southwest Michigan. Since joining the PACE team in August of 2022, Raine has re-introduced our PCA program, which prepares new hires in the position to ensure our PACE participants are able to keep living safely and comfortably in their own homes.

Raine — PACE Nurse Educator

PCAs are trained to perform a variety of skills for individuals needing more assistance at home. This can range from light housekeeping to bathing assistance

and other basic home healthcare. “In many ways, they’re with the participants more often than most of the other disciplines. They can really be the eyes and ears of PACE,” Raine says.

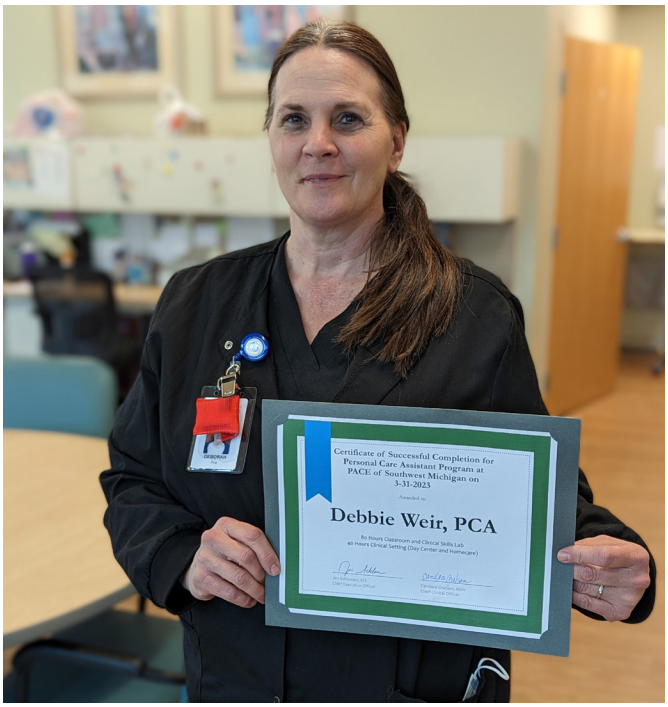
The program consists of 80 hours of skill-based education over the course of three weeks, with curriculum approved by the State of Michigan. At least half of those hours are spent outside of PACE in a clinical skill lab, where incoming PCAs train on skills like oral care to changing occupied beds. The other half of the program going hands-on in home healthcare and at the PACE Day Center.

Raine credits a lot of the success of the returning program to what was put in place before her, and the ability to collobarate with multiple different resources. She had previously worked in hospice care, and was able to use local facilities and other resources to train new PCAs.

Raine says it’s been “thrilling” to work with the newly hired PCAs since bringing back the program late last year. “We’ve had three people go through the program very successfully, particularly with in-home care.” PCAs Alona and Jewel finished the program, just as our participants rang in 2023, and PCA Debbie started at the beginning of April.

One of the great benefits of PACE’s PCA program is that there’s no cost to go through the training, and new hires receive compensation while going through the initial education period.

PACE PCAs Jewel Fowler and Alona Jackson



PACE PCA Debbie Weir

PCAs are a crucial part of the PACE model, as they handle both in-home care, and are able to assist participants in the main Day Center, and our ever-growing team is always welcoming new applicants to the program.

Be sure to say “Thank you” when you see your PACE PCA!

PACE Day at the Capitol

PACE team members and participants on the steps of the State Capitol at PACE Day

This past May, we took part in the PACE Association of Michigan's annual PACE Day at the Capitol in Lansing. The event saw team members and participants from all 14 PACE programs across the state of Michigan come together to advocate to our state legislators for continued support of the PACE program.

A highlight of the day was the awards ceremonoy, which saw our very own Sherry Simpson (NP, PCP) be awarded the 2023 PACE Association of Michigan Direct Care Award, in recognition of her dedication and commitment to the participants of PACE of Southwest Michigan and the greater senior community.

"It is my honor and privilege to serve my participants and their families working alongside our dedicated PACE team," Sherry says of her award recognition. "I am grateful to be able to spend time getting to know my participants and families to be able to help them navigate their health journey in helping keep them as happy, healthy and at home as possible.

I look forward to many years of service at PACE."

Two participants, Barb and Johnny, also joined in the trip to Lansing. Johnny had never seen the State Capitol building, or even been to Lansing before. "I liked seeing all the flags and paintings inside," Johnny said about going inside the Captiol. "I'd never been to Lansing, I'd really like to go again next year."

Visiting Lansing was also relatively new to Barb, who had only been to the city once many years ago. "I really enjoyed meeting all the people," Barb said. "I was meeting people from Kalamazoo, and I really enjoyed the entertainment and the dancing. It was just a great trip."

Later in the day, we were visited by Representative Pauline Wendzel, who represents the Van Buren County region of PACE of Southwest Michigan's service area.

"I'm proud to support PACE's mission of enhancing the lives of our older Michiganders," Wendzel said, following the event. "Together, we will continue working towards providing the care and support our seniors deserve!"

Dr. White, Barb, and Rhonda Gibson enjoy dancing and entertainment on the Capitol Lawn

From L to R: Stephanie Winslow, Executive Director — PACE Association of Michigan; Sherry Simpson, NP, PCP — PACE of Southwest Michigan; Elizabeth Hertel, Director — Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Representative Pauline Wendzel meets with the PACE of Southwest Michigan team and participants at the Capitol

Participant Story Paul Mattie

Paul Mattie grew up in Boston, Massachusetts, the youngest of seven children. “My family meant everything to me,” Paul said. “My dad – he was just a good man. Everybody loved him. The kids in the neighborhood – when Dad got home –they’d say: ‘Here comes Mr. Mattie!’ He’d tell them little kid jokes and he had a special handshake. He was just a cool dude. He was a good father. He was a very honest, good man. When I did something right, he would say: ‘Paul, you did the right thing.’ But when I did something wrong, he’d make me stay in my room for three days. He was just teaching me the real world. I had a good father and mother. They left a good legacy.”

“I’m a Catholic,” Paul said. “I always was and always will be.” Paul attended parochial school throughout the grades. He rode a bus to a trolley to get to St. Thomas Aquinas High School. “My buddies went to public school. We were in the same grade, but I was three years ahead of them. So, I helped them.” As young adults, Paul and his friends vacationed on Cape Cod. “We’d rent a little cottage for a week and goof around. I love the ocean.” In their late teens, Paul’s experienced buddies took him hunting for his first time. With a deer in his scope, Paul’s friends urged him to take the shot. Instead, Paul fired into the air to scare off the deer. “There’s no way I could shoot a beautiful animal,” he said. “Boy, did I get teased!”

As an adult, Paul served nine years as an officer in the K-9 unit of Boston’s tactical police force. Paul’s trained partner was named Trooper. “He wouldn’t listen to no one but me,” said Paul. “When I told him to get someone, he’d jump right up and knock them over. He was involved in about 38 arrests. He didn’t care if they had a gun,” Paul said.

Speaking on his family, Paul says “I have three children, seven grandchildren and a few great-grandchildren. I call up everybody. If I don’t – they call me.”

Paul rents a house near Berrien Springs. “I always keep it spotless,” he said. “I mow the lawn and shovel the snow.” At home, his Golden Retriever and little black cat coexist well, Paul says. “I’m an animal lover.” On Sunday, he tunes into a Catholic Mass on television. “It’s like being at church,” Paul said. “A lot of people here are Seventh Day Adventists. I hadn’t heard about Seventh Day Adventists before, and what a big, beautiful college they have!”

At the PACE Day Center Paul enjoys being with other participants. “We all talk and eat. They tell you all their stories. And the aides come up and ask: ‘Would you like anything?’ They’re so nice. We play BINGO and have some laughs. We have a ball when we’re there. It’s a friendly place. I have a good time in there. But my dog’s mad at me for going. When I get home, he’s watching in the window.”

Speaking again of his family, Paul tells of caring for his mother. “I had her living with me in Florida. She had Alzheimer’s. She thought my dad was still living. She’d get up and make him breakfast. I didn’t tell her. It was kind of sad to see her like that. I love my mother and father and family to death. I always will. That’s the way life is.”

Day Center Photos

Celebrating winter and spring holidays with Valentine's and St. Patrick's Day activities!

Visits from Bingo the motorcycle riding dog, Bible studies with our Spiritual Care Coordinator Tim, and fun with exercise!

New Faces *at* PACE!

Please join us in welcoming these professionals to PACE!

Amy Bowen, Internal Scheduler; **Ashley Brown**, Pharmacy Technician; **Kelle Chandler,** Clinic LPN; **Betsy Depuydt,** Day Center Aide; **Andrew Dormus**, HR Manager; **Cameila Douglas,** Receptionist; **Sheena Isom,** Medical Assistant; **Aaron Marsh**, Procurement Specialist; **Traci Payne,** Clinic RN; **Tim Pietrogallo**, Spiritual Care Coordinator; **Wendy Roberts,** HCC LPN; **Fatimah Rollins,** Day Center CNA; **Marian Sample**, PTA; **Kara Smith,** Medical Assistant (Contract); **Kim Smith**, Community Resource Liaison; **Nicholas Thielmann**, Social Worker MSW; **Amanda Turner**, Homecare CNA; **Deborah Wier**, PCA

Amy Bowen
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Sheena Isom
Medical Assistant

Aaron Marsh
Procurement Specialist

Traci Payne
Clinic RN

Tim Pietrogallo
Spiritual Care Coordinator

Wendy Roberts
HCC LPN

Fatimah Rollins
Day Center CNA

Marian Sample
PTA

Kara Smith
Medical Assistant
(Contract)

Kim Smith
Community
Resource Liaison

Nicholas Thielmann
Social Worker MSW

Amanda Turner
Homecare CNA

Deborah Weir
PCA

Promotions - Congrats!

Kelly Calkins
Quality and Regulatory Specialist

Donna Enochs
Day Center Supervisor

Gabby Mancera
Intake Coordinator RN

Cathy Pohl
Medical Claims Analyst

Ale Soto
Executive Coordinator

PACE
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Participants may be fully and personally responsible for the costs of unauthorized or out-of-PACE program agreement services.
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